

Area News

Building Great Highways For Less Money

Musgrave introduces bill to increase highway construction at a lower cost

Continuing her fight to build more roads at lower costs, Rep. Marilyn Musgrave (CO-04) today introduced a bill in Congress to reform outdated and burdensome regulations from the Davis - Bacon Act. Upon introduction, H.R. 2672 has the bi-partisan support of over 60 co-sponsors, including House Majority Leader Tom Delay, Republican Study Committee Chairman Sue Myrick, Transportation Committee members Jim DeMint, Howard Coble, Richard Baker, and Robin Hayes, as well as Colorado Representatives Joel Hefley, Scott McInnis, Bob Beauprez, and Tom Tancredo.

"Reforming this outdated and burdensome law to bring down road construction costs is key to building more roads in Colorado - without raising taxes," said Musgrave. "The current price of highway construction is artificially inflated above open market values. Hardworking taxpayers are financing these extra costs when their tax dollars should be put to better use."

Rep. Sue Myrick (R-NC) stated, "I am pleased to join with my colleague Mrs. Musgrave in the introduction of this important legislation. Rep. Musgrave is offering constructive solutions to our nation's transportation problems. The members of the Republican

Study Committee have pledged to find alternatives to increase highway funding without raising taxes. I thank Rep. Musgrave for offering such an innovative initiative."

Specifically, Musgrave's legislation repeals the federal prevailing wage mandate in current Davis - Bacon law on transportation projects. In addition, this legislation allows states to determine, on their own and without affecting others, if they should continue paying prevailing wages on construction highway projects. For those states that choose to pay open market prices, this would save an average of 5 - 15 percent of construction costs and as much as 38 percent in rural areas like Colorado's eastern plains.

Based on conservative cost estimates of the Heritage Foundation, a Washington, D.C., based public policy organization, costs of highway construction would decline by \$16 to \$20 billion over the next six years.

"Representative Musgrave has shown great leadership in finding alternatives to building more roads at lower costs," said Bill Spencer, Vice President of Government Relations at Associated Builders and Contractors, a Washington, DC, based trade supporting Musgrave's legislation. "Taxpayers shell out enough

of their hard earned income to pay for highways and they deserve greater accountability in keeping costs down and getting more, which is exactly what Musgrave's bill provides."

Already this year, Musgrave is leading the opposition in the House to a proposed increase in the federal gasoline tax, which would immediately raise costs by five cents per gallon and nearly double the tax by 2009. The legislation she introduced today is one of Musgrave's proposed alternatives to paying for more highway construction, without raising taxes.

"If this bill becomes law, states all across the nation will be able to build more roads at a lower price," said Musgrave. "Now that's a good deal for American's highway users and the American taxpayer."

Marilyn Musgrave was elected to the United States House of Representatives in January 2003, and she represents Colorado's Fourth Congressional District. Musgrave is a member of the House Committees on Agriculture, Education and the Workforce, and Small Business. To learn more about Rep. Musgrave please visit her official website at <http://www.house.gov/musgrave>.